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Special Committee on the Charter of the United Nations and on the Strengthening of the Role of the Organization
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Draft report

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V. Working methods of the Special Committee and identification of new subjects

A. Working methods of the Special Committee

1. The issue of the working methods of the Special Committee was addressed by several delegations during the general exchange of views held at the 281st and 282nd meetings of the Special Committee, on 16 and 17 February 2016, and was considered at the 3rd, 4th and 5th meetings of the Working Group of the Whole.

2. Several delegations stressed that the Special Committee played an important role in the clarification and interpretation of provisions of the Charter of the United Nations and that there was a need to reinvigorate its work. The potential of the Special Committee to assist in the revitalization of the Organization, as was evident from the landmark instruments that it had produced in the past, including the Manila Declaration on the Peaceful Settlement of International Disputes, was also noted.

3. Several delegations continued to urge the Special Committee to consider, on a priority basis, ways and means of improving its working methods and enhancing its efficiency, and to fully implement the decision on working methods adopted in 2006, as reflected in paragraph 3 (e) of General Assembly resolution 70/117. Several delegations emphasized that there was a need for States to review all existing agenda items, looking into the added value of further discussing them, and taking into account their continued relevance and the likelihood of reaching a consensus in the future before considering new items.

4. Some delegations reiterated that the work of the Special Committee should be reviewed to ensure that the overlap between organs considering the same or similar issues was eliminated and that items that had been or were being considered elsewhere were not duplicated by the Special Committee. Some delegations reaffirmed that the Special Committee should examine the frequency and duration of its meetings, perhaps by meeting every two years or shortening its sessions.

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5. Some delegations spoke against any proposal to shorten the duration of the sessions or not to convene the Special Committee annually. It was pointed out that there should be greater possibilities for substantive and constructive debates on existing and new proposals. It was suggested that the Special Committee should discuss proposals paragraph by paragraph.

6. Several delegations re-emphasized that the full execution of the mandate of the Special Committee depended on the political will of States and on the full implementation and optimization of the methods of work of the Special Committee. It was also suggested that some States were blocking the consideration of proposals before the Special Committee without presenting any substantive arguments as to their reasoning. In this regard, some delegations regretted that, at its 2015 session, the Special Committee had not been able to agree on a recommendation for a resolution regarding the commemoration of the seventieth anniversary of the Charter.

7. Several delegations placed special emphasis on continuing to consider items and proposals regarding the question of the maintenance of international peace and security, in particular those addressing the functions of the General Assembly. It was also observed by several delegations that the Special Committee was the appropriate forum for the consideration of reform proposals that would enhance the effectiveness and legitimacy of the Organization.

8. It was suggested that the documents of the Special Committee should be made available through the PaperSmart portal, and that future open meetings of the Special Committee should be webcast.

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B. Identification of new subjects

9. The issue of the identification of new subjects was considered during the general exchange of views held at the 281st and 282nd meetings of the Special Committee, on 16 and 17 February, and at the 3rd, 4th and 5th meetings of the Working Group of the Whole.

10. At the 3rd meeting of the Working Group of the Whole, the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran (on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement) introduced a proposal entitled "Proposal of the Non-Aligned Movement on the commemoration of the seventieth anniversary of the International Court of Justice" (A/AC.182/L.143). At the 4th meeting of the Working Group, the sponsor delegation submitted a revised version of the proposal containing a recommendation for adoption by the Special Committee (A/AC.182/L.144). The sponsor delegation observed that its proposal acknowledged the important role played by the International Court of Justice as a principal organ of the United Nations, and its accomplishments in the peaceful settlement of disputes and the development of international law.

11. Several delegations voiced their support for the proposal, underlining that it closely followed the text of General Assembly resolution 61/37, adopted to mark the sixtieth anniversary of the International Court of Justice. The significant contribution of the Court to the architecture of international law was also emphasized.

12. Some delegations drew attention to the fact that celebrations, involving high-level representatives of United Nations organs and the host State, were scheduled to be held in The Hague.

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